



ELECTIONS DIVISION
520 Union Avenue SE- PO Box 40229
Olympia, WA 98504-0229
Tel: 360.902.4180
Fax 360.664.4619
www.secstate.wa.gov/elections

September 26, 2006

The Honorable Suzanne Sinclair
Island County Auditor
PO Box 5000
Coupeville WA 98239-5000

Dear Ms. Sinclair,

In accordance with RCW 29A.04.570, the State Election Certification and Training Program conducted a comprehensive review of election procedures in Island County during the May 2006 Special Election.

The RCW also requires a follow-up visit prior to the next primary or general election to verify that the county has taken the steps necessary to correct the changes recommended in the review report. The State Election Certification and Training Program conducted its follow-up visit on September 15, 2006.

As indicated below, the reviewer made a number of recommendations in the initial report. The Island County Auditor provided responses to the recommendations at the follow-up review.

1. *The reviewer recommended that the Island County Auditor's Office retain the security envelopes from absentee ballots.*

This procedure was implemented prior to the issuance of the final review report and the Island County Auditor reported that this procedure has been changed in both written policies and procedures and continues in practice.

2. *The reviewer recommended that the Auditor's Office use visible features to draw precinct boundary lines rather than section, township, and range lines at the next time precinct boundary lines are adjusted. In addition, it was recommended that the Auditor's Office make Swantown Precinct compact and contiguous as soon as possible.*

The Island County Auditor reported that due to the impending fall elections, adjustments to the precincts have not been made. However, the Auditor plans to implement such changes at the first opportunity this spring.

3. *The reviewer recommended that the required statement regarding voter eligibility be included with the absentee ballot materials if the ballots will continue to be forwarded.*

The Island County Auditor reported that the required statement has been added to the instructions that accompany absentee ballots.

4. *The reviewer recommended that the election staff create and use adequate test decks for future logic and accuracy tests.*

The Island County Auditor reported that this procedure has been changed to meet the standards adopted in Washington Administrative Code in both the county's written policies and procedures and in practice.

5. *The reviewer recommended that the members of the County Canvassing Board follow the policies and procedures that were previously adopted in the Canvassing Board's Manual or if opinions of the Canvassing Board have changed, that the manual be updated to reflect such changes.*

The Island County Auditor reported that the Canvassing Board Manual has been updated to ensure consistency.

6. *The reviewer made several recommendations in the area of ballot security.*
 - A) *All ballots in trays and tubs and mobile ballots boxes must be sealed and documented using a seal log maintained to detect unauthorized access.*
 - B) *The cabinet outside of the storage/work area must be sealed and documented to detect unauthorized access.*
 - C) *The ballot drop-off box located in the elections office must either be better secured or staff must be present at all times.*
 - D) *Ballots either need to be sealed or accompanied by two staff persons when being transported between rooms that there is no line of sight between.*
 - E) *Two people must be present at all times when ballots are processed, including scanning and resolving.*

The Island County Auditor reported that these procedures have been changed in both the written policies and procedures and in practice. In addition, the Auditor has requested additional staff to ensure that the office is able to maintain the practice of having two staff available at all times.

7. *The reviewer recommended that the Auditor's Office create application forms for a voter to request and receive a hospital absentee ballot and a special absentee ballot.*

The Island County Auditor reported that a new form has been created for a voter to request either a hospital absentee ballot or a special absentee ballot.

8. *The reviewer made several recommendations with regards to poll sites.*
- A) The Auditor's Office must ensure that a HAVA poster and voting instructions in at least 16 point font are displayed at each poll site.*
 - B) Election staff persons must continue to stress to the poll workers during training the importance of requiring identification for all voters, including those personally known.*
 - C) Poll sites should be reviewed to ensure that all sites are accessible. If the poll site is found to be inaccessible, it must be listed in the notice of an inaccessible poll site.*
 - D) The Island County Auditor's staff must ensure that poll workers are supplied with two separate containers: one for voted ballots and one for unvoted ballots. Poll workers must render all unvoted ballots unusable after the closing of the polls.*
 - E) A free access system that provides voters, at the time of voting a provisional ballot, written information as to how to find out whether the ballot was counted, must be developed and implemented in Island County.*

The County Auditor reported that separate containers will be provided to each poll site for voted and unvoted ballots and that all other issues were reiterated during poll worker training. A free access system for provisional ballots has been developed and will be implemented for the primary election.

9. *The reviewer made several recommendations regarding various notices.*
- A) Island County must develop a method to notify affected candidates that there will be no primary for the position for which they have filed for office.*
 - B) A warning needs to be added to the confirmation notice that informs the voter that his or her voter registration will be cancelled upon the failure to either respond to the notice or cast a vote prior to the passing of two federal elections.*
 - C) Prior to each election, a letter must be sent to each of the political party chairs providing the dates that particular election activities will be taking place and inviting party observers to observe such activities.*
 - D) A public notice providing information for the date, time, and location of all logic and accuracy tests, including those for special elections, must be provided to the local media.*
 - E) A questionnaire to cities, towns, and districts must be mailed each year prior to May 1.*

The Island County Auditor reported that four of the five recommendations regarding the various notices have been changed in both the policies and procedures and in will be implemented in practice at the next opportunity. The Auditor is in the process of updating the fifth recommendation for the confirmation notice to include the required warning statement.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 360.902.4165.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Amber Cervantes".

Amber Cervantes, Program Specialist
Certification and Training Program, OSOS

C: The Honorable William L. "Mac" McDowell, Chair, Island County
Commissioners
The Honorable Gregory M. Banks, Island County Prosecuting Attorney